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THE BEAUTY OF DEATH.

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Humanity has a faculty for ignoring and abusing its benefactors which amounts almost to a genius. Scarcely an age can be mentioned which has not starved its Homer, poisoned its Socrates, banished its Aristides, stoned its Stephen, burned its Savonarola, or imprisoned its Galileo. Nor is the strange perversion of sentiment confined to our fellow-mortals. The great, calm, stern, yet loving forces of nature have constantly fallen under the unjust stigma, and though we have outlived many earthly misconceptions or misrepresentations of most of these, a ghastly, repulsive, lying mask is still permitted to conceal the kindly, though stern features of Pallida Mors albeit both religion and science are striving hard to tear it away. Let us endeavor to lift up a tiny corner long enough to catch a glimpse of what lies behind it.

I regard the prevailing conception of death as false in three important particulars: First, that it is in some way an enemy of, or opposed to, life; second, that it is a process of dissipation or degeneration involving and associated with a fearful waste of energy, time, and material; third, that it is a harsh, painful ordeal, from which every fibre of organic being shrinks in terror.

I am aware that my first contention will seem like a flat contradiction in terms, but a few illustrations will probably make my meaning plainer. Let us take those earliest and lowest results of formative tendencies in matter, the crystals, "the flowers of the rocks," as Ruskin beautifully calls them. Here we have individual units which for beauty, variety, and definiteness of form, brilliancy of color, and purity of substance, stand absolutely unrivalled in all the higher walks of life. Watch them forming, and see with what certainty atom seeks atom, here a diamond, there a cube, again a prism or rosette, each substance having its own definite, peculiar shape, with an utter disregard of all alien materials in the mass. Mark how crystal seeks crystal and proceeds to weave its own warp and woof, in column, in truncated cone, in spire, in lace-like web of slender needles, each according to its kind. See how the advance columns of the various ingredients of the mass, cut through, ride over, or yield to one another, in regular social order of rank, dependent not upon bulk or hardness, but upon purity of substance and organising power, upon crystal vitality in fact, and suppress if you can the conviction that these organisms are alive. The only thing they lack is the inherent faculty of dying. Drown and dissolve them by fluid, fuse into shapeless masses by volcanic heat, and on the very earliest opportunity they will promptly and surely resume their former shape and beauty. Gentler influences they defy. So long as they exist they are indestructible, and their lifetime is that of the everlasting hills. Here, if anywhere in the universe, is eternal life, in the popular sense of the term, but it were better named eternal death.

Crystal life is a bar of adamant to progress. Beautiful in itself, it is utterly barren, inhospitable, hopeless as regards future growth. It can neither grow itself, nor assist anything else to grow, save in one way, by dying.

The old earth shrinks a little in cooling, and our mass of crystals is suddenly elevated from cavernous depths to the top or side of one of those long wrinkles we call mountain ranges; the sun heats it, and the rains pour upon it, the frosts gnaw at its edges, until at length its vitality becomes impaired, and it succumbs to the elements. The whole structure crumbles into a shapeless mass of dull, damp, colorless, lifeless clay. Here, indeed, to all appearances is the desolation of death in all its hopeless repulsiveness. But wait a moment; here comes a tiny descendant of some crystal which has stumbled upon the faculty of dying and improved thereon unto the fifty-thousandth generation, a lichen spore, drifting along the surface of the rock. It glances forlornly off from the flinty faces of the living crystals, but finds a home and a welcome at once upon the moist surface of the clay. Filmy rootlets run downward, tiny buds shoot upward, the new life has begun. It ensnares the sunlight in its emerald mesh, entangles the life-vapors of the air in its web, and grows and spreads until the valley of crystal death becomes transformed into a cushion of living green in the lap of the gaunt, grey granite.

But what as to further progress? The lichen is green and beautiful, but as an individual it can never develop into anything higher. Here again progress

is absolutely barred by life, and must call death to its aid. The lichen dies, and its dust returns to the earth, carrying with it the spoils of the sunlight, the air, and the dew, to enrich the seed-bed. A hundred generations follow, each one leaving a legacy of fertility, until the soil becomes capable of sustaining a richer, stronger, higher order of plant-life, whose rootlets push into every crevice and rend the solid rock; the living carpet spreads; grass, flower, and shrub succeed one another in steady succession, until the cold grey rock-trough is transformed into the lovely mountain glen with its myriad life. As the poet sings, the crystals have risen "on stepping stones of their dead selves to nobler things," and of any link in the chain the inspired dictum would be equally true that "except to die, it abideth alone."

But, says some one, this is all very true as to the surface of Mother Earth; but how about the deeper structures, her ribs and body bulk?

Every layer of the earth was part of the surface at one time, and the more intimately death has entered into their composition, the more highly organised the corpses of which they are composed, and the more useful and important they are.

Come back with me a few hundred years to the great tree-fern period, and gaze upon the matted jungle of frond and stem, thirty to sixty feet in height, which covers mile after mile of swamp. Here, indeed, is life in all its glory, yet it is a living shroud. No hum is there of insect-life or twitter of birds that build their nests in the branches; for there is neither flower, berry, nor seed to support the tiniest life. No animal can live on its stringy, indigestible fodder. The rank growth crushes out any possibility of nobler, more generous plant-life. The old earth gives a tired sigh, her bosom heaves and sinks, and the waters rush in and cover the jungle, drown it, crush it, bury it with silt, compress and mummify it, and it is numbered with the "has-beens," until one day man stumbles upon a fragment of its remains in the face of some sea-cliff, and coal, the food of the steam-engine, the motive power of latter-day commerce and civilisation, is discovered. Alive, it was a worthless weed; dead, it becomes "black diamonds."

There is another illustration very much in point, indeed, but so familiar through the medium of Sunday-school literature, and so nearly worn threadbare as a text for sermons, that I hesitate to allude to it. I refer to that exemplary being, the coral insect. This sturdy little polyp anchors himself to the surface of the sunken reef, and with an industry and devotion that would do him infinite credit, if we could for a moment imagine that he was actuated by any other motive than that of filling his own greedy little stomach, he swallows and deposits in his tissues the lime-salts until his whole substance becomes literally petrified and forms a stepping-stone of adamant for the succeeding generation. This process is repeated a few million times, and the lovely coral island, with its lofty palms, emerald verdure, silver sands, and glittering bird and insect life, breaks the surface of the howling waste of waters. Alive, he is a flabby, shapeless atom of greyish jelly; dead, he is a rainbow-hued crystal of loveliest outline —a thing of beauty in himself and the rock-ribbed support of countless other forms of life and beauty above the surface. Alive, he is an insignificant, slimy little salt-water slug; dead, he is a part of the framework of the universe, and a saintly creature, whose value as a moral example can hardly be overestimated.

When we turn to the higher forms of being, the dependence of life upon precedent death is so self-evident as to have been formulated into a truism. That the grass must die that sheep may live, and that sheep must die that man may live, are facts as familiar as the multiplication-table. If the command, "Thou shalt not kill," were to be interpreted to extend to our animal cousins and our vegetable ancestors, it might as well read at once, "Thou shalt starve."

In this sense death is as important and essential a vital function as birth, and the highest aim of many an organism is attained, not by its birth, but by its death. Literally: "He that loveth his life shall save it," in the world to come. Without this power of the lower life to forward the higher life by dying, progress of any sort would be absolutely impossible. There be forms which when they are devoured refuse to die, but we call them parasites, and should hardly choose the tape-worm as a symbol of progress.

Even when we reach the human stage where no such direct digestive transformation into higher forms is possible, the same necessity is still apparent.

To permit progress in the social, political, or moral worlds it becomes ultimately just as sternly essential, cruel as the fact may seem at first sight, that the old generation should die, as that the new should be born.

Now let us look for a few moments at the second prevailing misconception of death as a destroyer and waster. This is apparently supported by a vast array of facts, ranging from the tremendous loss of life among the eggs or young of the lower forms to the sudden cutting short of existences in which meet the labor and preparation of generations of the past and the hopes of the future. What is the use of being born only to die, of laboriously building up an organism or character only to have it destroyed, annihilated, scattered like smoke?

To the first part of the question the answer almost suggests itself, viz., that this destruction is only apparent. Nothing is really lost at all. Merely the form

is changed, and as it is necessary that life should be produced in great abundance in order to give nature, figuratively speaking, a wide field for selection, some method becomes absolutely indispensable by which the elements of the unfit, incompetent, non elect forms can be promptly returned to the great crucible of nature, there to be available for use in new and improved patterns. So far from being a waster, death is the great economist of nature, enabling her to conduct her most extensive experiments with a mere handful of material.

But, you will reply, this accounts only, so to speak, for the materials used. Are not the vantage grounds so hardly won, the wonderful organising power, the long years expended, utterly lost and hopelessly wasted? I answer, no; but rather secured thereby. They become an immutable part of the history of the race. The upward growth of the race is not an even, continuous line, but a series of ever-ascending tiny curves, each the life of an individual, and the tiny shoot of the curve of the life that is to follow is given off from near our highest point.

Death is the great embalmer, the casket into which our loved ones are received in the very flower of their beauty and the glory of their strength. A sheaf of corn fully ripe is a beautiful, dignified, inspiring sight and memory, but it must be *reaped* to make it so, and not left on the stem to rot and freeze.

And it should not be forgotten that so long as life lasts, not only is growth possible, but degeneration also; and that the further the zenith of power is passed, the more probable does the latter become. Nothing can imperil the good that a man has done save his own later weakness, treason, or folly; and when the mortal dart pierces him it transfixes him where he stands and secures the vantage-ground he has won. Death's function here is, as it were, a ratchet upon the notched wheel of human progress, to secure every inch gained as a starting point for the life to come.

But the crowning beauty and noblest impulse of the process is that it is intrinsically a burying of the old life to enrich the new. The parent form falls with all the scars, the weariness and grime of the conflict, into the gentle lap of Mother Earth, in order that the new life may rise, fresh, pure, triumphant. Old errors are buried, old failures forgotten. The good of all the past is inherited, the evil falls by its own weight. The race takes a fresh start every generation. We are all but drops in the grand stream of life, which flows with ever-widening sweep through all the ages.

We are immortal, if we but form a true, sturdy link in the great chain of life. It is this unbroken continuity of life, ever rising to nobler levels from the ashes of apparent death that is so beautifully typified by the Phœnix and similar traditions. We should cheerfully pay the debt of nature, proudly confident that she will be able to invest the capital to better advantage next time, from the interest we have laboriously added to it.

There need be no shrinking dread of the "pangs of dissolution," the "final agony," for such things have no existence save in disordered imaginations. Ask any physician whose head is silvered over with grey, and he will tell you that while disease is often painful, death itself is gentle, painless, natural, like the fading of a flower or the falling of a leaf. It is literally true that there is a time to die as well as to live, and when that time comes the event becomes not only tolerable, but, like all other natural processes, desirable; every fibre of our tired, worn-out being demands it.

The overwhelming majority of such records of authentic "last words" as we possess, re-echo the saying of Charles II. on his death-bed: "If this be dying, nothing could be easier."

Even in such an extreme case as death under the fangs of wild beasts, all those who have gone very near the Valley of the Shadow from this cause unite in testifying, incredible as it may seem, that after the first shock of the attack there is absolutely no sensation of pain.

For instance, Livingstone, upon one occasion, was pounced upon by a lion, which felled him to the ground, and, making his teeth meet in his shoulder, dragged him a considerable distance into the jungle before his followers could come to his assistance. Livingstone asserts most positively that he was perfectly conscious of what was happening when he was being carried, could hear the cries of his friends, and wondered how long it would take them to reach him, but that he felt no pain or fear whatever, nothing but a strange, drowsy, dreamy sensation. And yet his shoulder was so severely injured that he never fully recovered the use of it, and his body was identified after death by the scars.

Sir Samuel Baker reports a similar experience with a bear which he had wounded. The great brute felled him by a stunning blow from its paw, and he was aroused to consciousness by its crunching the bones of his hand; it continued the process up his arm, and had almost reached the shoulder before the rescuing party could reach him, and yet Sir Samuel declares that he felt no pain whatever, and that his only sensation was one of intense resentment against the beast for seeming to enjoy the taste of him so much. Nor are these by any means exceptional instances, as many other such reports could be collected, and it is almost an axiom with surgeons that the severer the injury the less the pain. Many a man has received his death-

wound and never known it until his strength began to fail.

But nature is even more merciful than this. Contrary to popular impression and pulpit pyrotechnics, the fear of death, which is so vivid in life and health, absolutely disappears as soon as his hand is laid upon us. Every physician knows from experience that not one person in fifty is afraid or even unwilling to die when the time actually comes, and in the vast majority of instances our patients drift into a state of dreamy indifference to the result as soon as they become seriously ill. So universally is this true that we seldom feel any uneasiness as to the result of a case in which a lively fear of death is exhibited. The highest sensibilities are the first to die; so that both pain and fear are usually abolished, literally rendered impossible, hours, days, or even weeks, before the end comes. Our dear ones drift gently out into the sea of rest, on the ebbing tide of life, with a smile upon their sleeping faces.

For every minor injury nature provides a remedy; for every hopeless one, a narcotic.

In not a few instances this indifference becomes changed into positive longing for death. Days of suffering and nights of sleepless weariness quickly bring men to stretch out their arms to the great Rest-bringer. Fever-parched and pain weary men and women long for death as tired children long for sleep. Ask your own family physician and he will tell you that as a matter of fact he has heard five prayers for death to one for life, when fate is trembling in the balance.

Because the thought of Death in the noon-tide of life sends a chill through them, people never stop to think that their feelings may entirely change with the circumstances, and will not understand, as the good old Methodist elder shrewdly expressed it, that they "can't expect to get dying grace to live by."

* * *

The ghastly *in articulo mortis*, or "death-struggle," of which we hear so much in dramatic literature, religious or otherwise, does not occur in one case in ten, and then usually long after consciousness has ceased. When death comes near enough so that we can see the eyes behind the mask, his face becomes as welcome as that of his twin brother, sleep.

THE OLD SHOEMAKER.

BY VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

He had lived a long time there in the house at the end of the alley, and no one had ever known that he was a great man. He was lean and palsied and had a crooked back; his beard was grey and ragged, and his eyebrows came too far forward; there were seams and flaps in the empty, yellow old skin, and he gasped horribly when he breathed, taking hold of the lintel of the door to steady himself when he stepped out on the broken bricks of the alley. He lived with a frightful old woman who scrubbed the floors of the rag-shop, and drank beer, and growled at the children who poked fun at her. He had lived with her eighteen years, she said, stroking the furry little kitten that curled up in her neck as if she had been beautiful.

Eighteen years they had been drinking and quarrelling together—and suffering. She had seen the flesh sucking away from the bones, and the skin falling in upon them, and the long, lean fingers growing more lean and trembling, as they crooked round his shoemaking tools. It was very strange she had not grown thin;—the beer had bloated her, and rolls of weak, shaking flesh lapped over the ridges of her uncouth figure. Her pale, lack-lustre blue eyes wandered aimlessly about as she talked: No,—he had never told her, not even in their quarrels, not even when they were drunken together, of the great Visitor who had come up the little alley yesterday, walking so stately over the sun-beaten bricks, taking no note of the others, and coming in at the door without asking. She had not expected such an One; how could she?

But the old shoemaker had shown no surprise at the Mighty One. He smiled and set down the tea-cup he was holding, and entered into communion with the Stranger. He noticed no others, but continued to smile, without speaking, into the dark, fathomless Face. He was smiling still, and the infinite dignity of the Unknown fell upon him and covered the wasted old limbs and the hard, wizen face, so that all we who entered bowed and went out and did not speak. But we understood, for the Mighty One gave understanding, without words. We had been in the presence of Freedom! We had stood at the foot of Tabor and seen this worn old world soiled soul lose all its dross and commonplace and pass upward, smiling, to the Transfiguration. In the hands of the Mighty One the crust had crumbled and dropped away into impalpable powder. Souls should be mixed of it no more. Only that which passed upward, the fine white playing flame, the heart of the *long, life*-long watches of patience, should rekindle there in the perennial ascension of the great Soul of Man.

GOOD AND EVIL AS RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

This world of ours is a world of opposites. There is light and shade, there is heat and cold, there is good and evil, there is God and the Devil.

The dualistic conception of nature has, it appears to us, been a necessary phase in the evolution of human thought. We find the same views of good and evil spirits prevailing among all the peoples of the

earth at the very beginning of that stage of their development which, in the phraseology of Tylor, is commonly called Animism. But the principle of unity dominates the development of thought. Man tries to unify his conceptions in a consistent and harmonious monism. Accordingly, while the belief in good spirits tended towards the formation of the doctrine of Monotheism, the belief in evil spirits led naturally to the acceptance of one supreme evil deity, conceived to embody all that is bad, destructive, and immoral.

Monotheism and Monodiabolism, brought into being the one by the side of the other through the monistic tendencies of man's mental evolution, are not, however, the terminus of human mental development. As soon as the thinkers of mankind at this stage become aware of the dualism which is implied in the recognition of both these ideas, the tendency is again manifested towards a higher conception which is a purely monistic view.

Mankind as a whole is at present in the stage of monotheism, and has almost outgrown the dualism implied in monodiabolism. A truly monistic view is now dawning on the mental horizon.

Dualism is generally regarded by dualists as the cornerstone of religion and the basis of ethics. The break-down of dualism will, in their opinion, usher in an era of brutal immorality; and many of those who call themselves monists because they reject dualism on account of several of its most palpable errors seem to justify this prejudice among dualists, for monism is often directly identified with irreligion and religion with dualism.

Those who do not appreciate the mission of dualism in the evolution of human thought, and only know its doctrines to be untenable, naturally expect that the future of mankind will be irreligious, and freethinkers declare that atheism will supersede all the different conceptions of God. But this is neither desirable nor probable. The monistic tendencies of the age will not destroy, but purify and elevate religion. The animism of the savage is a necessary stage of mental evolution: it appears as an error to the higher developed man of a half civilised period; but the error contains a truth; it is the seed from which the more perfect conception of the surrounding world grows. Similarly, the religious ideas of the present time are symbols. Taken in their literal meaning, they are nonsensical errors, but understood in their symbolical nature, they are seeds from which a purer conception of the truth will have to grow. The tendencies of philosophic thought prevailing to-day lead to a positive conception of the world which replaces symbols by actual facts, implying not a denial of religious allegories but their deeper and more correct conception.

A state of irreligion in which mankind would adopt and publicly teach a doctrine of atheism is an impossibility. Atheism is a negation, and negations cannot stand. Yet our present anthropomorphic view of God, briefly called Anthropotheism, which as a rule conceives him as an infinitely big individual being, will have to yield to a higher view in which we shall understand that the idea of a personal God is a mere simile. God is much more than a person. When we speak of God as a person, we ought to be conscious of the fact that we use an allegory which, if it were taken literally, can only belittle him. The God of the future will not be personal, but superpersonal.

But how shall we reach this knowledge of the superpersonal God? Our answer is, with the help of science. Let us pursue in religion the same path that science travels, and the narrowness of sectarianism will develop into a broad cosmical religion which shall be as wide and truly catholic as is science.

Symbols are not lies; symbols contain truth. Allegories and parables are not falsehoods; they convey information: moreover, they can be understood by those who are not as yet prepared to receive the plain truth. Thus, when in the progress of science religious symbols are recognised and known in their symbolical nature, this knowledge will not destroy religion but will purify it, and will cleanse it from mythology.

* * *

From a surveyal of the accounts gleaned from Waitz, Lubbock, and Tylor on the primitive state of religion, the conviction impresses itself upon the student of demonology that Devil-worship almost always precedes the worship of a benign and morally good Deity. There are at least many instances in which we can observe a transition from the lower stage of Devil-worship to the higher stage of God-worship, and it seems to be natural that fear should be the first incentive to religious worship. This is the reason why the dark figure of the Devil, that is to say, of a powerful evil deity, looms up as the most important personage in the remotest past of almost every faith. Demonolatry or Devil-worship is the first stage in the evolution of religious worship, for we fear the bad, not the good.

Mr, Herbert Spencer bases religion on the Unknown, declaring that the savage worships those powers which he does not understand. In order to give to religion a foundation which even the scientist does not dare to touch, he asserts the existence of an absolute Unknowable, and recommends it as the basis of the religion of the future. But facts do not agree with Mr. Spencer's proposition. The proverb says:

> "What I don't wot
> Makes me not hot."

What is absolutely unknowable does not concern us, and the savage does not worship the thunder be-

cause he *does not know* what it is, but because he *does know* what it is. He worships the thunder because he is afraid of it, because of the known and obvious dangers connected with it, which he feels unable to control.

Let us hear the men who have carefully collected and sifted the facts. Waitz, in speaking in his *Anthropologie* (Vol. III., pp. 182, 330, 335, 345) of the Indians who were not as yet semi-Christianised, states that the Florida tribes are said to have solemnly worshipped the Bad Spirit, Toia, who plagued them with visions, and to have had small regard for the Good Spirit, who troubled himself little about mankind. And Martius makes this characteristic remark of the rude tribes of Brazil:

"All Indians have a lively conviction of the power of an evil principle over them; in many there dawns also a glimpse of the good; but they revere the one less than they fear the other. It must be thought that they hold the Good Being weaker in relation to the fate of man than the Evil."[1]

Capt. John Smith, the hero of the colonisation of Virginia, in 1607, describes the worship of Oki (a word which apparently means that which is above our control) as follows:

"There is yet in Virginia no place discovered to be so Savage in which they haue not a Religion, Deer, and Bow and Arrowes. All things that are able to doe them hurt beyond their prevention, they adore with their kinde of divine worship; as the fire, water, lightning, thunder, our Ordnance peeces, horses, &c. But their chiefe god they worship is the Devill. Him they call *Okee*, and serue him more of feare than loue. They say they haue conference with him, and fashion themselves as neare to his shape as they can imagine. In their Temple they haue his image evill favouredly carved, and then painted and adorned with chaines of copper, and beads, and covered with a skin in such manner as the deformities may well suit with such a God."[2]

Religion always begins with fear. The religion of savages may directly be defined as "the fear of evil and the various efforts made to escape evil." Though the fear of evil in the religions of civilised nations plays no longer so prominent a part, we yet learn through historical investigations that at an earlier age of their development almost all worship was paid to the powers of evil, who were regarded with special awe and reverence.

Actual Devil worship continues until the positive power of good is recognised and man finds out by experience, that the good, although its progress may be ever so slow, is always victorious in the end. It is natural that the power that makes for righteousness is by and by recognised as the supreme ruler of all powers, and then the power of evil ceases to be an object of awe; it is no longer worshipped and not even propitiated, but struggled against, and the confidence prevails of a final victory of justice, right, and truth.

P. C.

[1] Quoted from Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II., p. 325.

[2] Tylor, ib., p. 342.

LIFE AND DEATH.

BY CHAS. A. LANE.

I.

The heart of Life is sweet, O, questioning soul!
It findeth honey in the senses' play,
And Beauty smiles to all the wandering thought.
The sheen of pleasure down the memory,
To doubtful glimmer tempers sorrow's gloom;
And e'en when thought strains backward thro' the life,
And merges off in silences beyond,
Forgotten ecstasies seem lingering there,
That fan the soul thro' gaps of ancient deaths.
A voiceless promise haunts eternity;
And when our longings pierce the yawning years,
Hope guides their wildered wings to halcyon calms
Where beaded eons meet and weld the soul
To truth and beauty and the good for aye.

When childhood's throbbing thought outgrows the toy,
Fond Nature meets th' advancing soul, and charms
The hope with dreams of rainbow-tinted lives;
And when the crowding world doth close us round
With mid-life's toil, ambition fires the will,
And drugs the weariness of Labor's brain;
While inner sense pours meed of noble deeds
In richer draughts than Ganymede dispensed
From dædal cups to laughing gods in times
Of old; and evermore the evening lures
With sunset glories and the rest of peace.
So Nature guardeth Life from stage to stage,
Adjusting pleasures to his shifting modes:
At eventimes, to hide the outworn world
She draws the robe of memory 'round the heart,
And throneth Hope upon the tomb to harp
Alluring lays, and tempt the thought beyond
The ken.

In beat of blood and pulse of breath
And sway of living limb—in stress of will
And thrill of dream and sense of very deed
A subtle ecstasy applaudeth life.
E'en thro' the myriad hordes of under-lives,
Whose reach of thought the narrow vision rims,
Some joy of being is that vigil keeps
Against encroachments of insidious death:
The charge of Nature's bliss escapes the bird
In noonday songs, or trickles from his throat
In muffled notes, which wakeful impulse breeds,
When thro' the sleep a sunny vision breaks
Of flowers that listen to a streamlet's song.
The butterfly gives back the floral sweets
In tinted glories flashing to the sun
From iris wings a-twinkle in the meads:
Yea, e'en the subtle souls of flowers have sense
Of pleasure in their lives: Doth not the vine,
In soft, alchemic wooings of the light,
Seek lengths to move it from the shrouding glooms
Where Death sits, working out his fateful will?
And Grief, can she not reach adown the life,
And win the consolation hid in tears?
Aye! even Sorrow hath a luxury;
For Joy, who thrills as with the lightning's pulse,
And Grief, who breathes the moans of midnight winds,
Alike find fullest language in a tear.

II.

Who calls thee cruel, Death ? Thou dwellest not
With evil things that wage against the life
Inexorable war ! Thou art not kin
To fell disease, nor friend to ruthless pain.
What though the grave-gloom broodeth in thine eye,
And at thy touch the frozen winter chill ?
What though the doom that smiteth in thy deeds
Seem crueler than evil's utmost curse ?
What though thou dwellest in the ebon halls
Where darkness guards his brood of mysteries ?
Thou yet, O Death, art Life's most gracious friend ;
And vigilant as waiting love thou art :
On blood and brain thou keepest watch and ward
Thro' all the throbbing world, with tender ken ;
And when disease her poison-viol pours
Of mad'ning fevers and the permeant plagues ;
Or when the maniac demon, Pain, with throes
Unmitigable scourges quivering flesh ;—
When fire or flood or dire Olympic bolt
Drives nature to the bourn of agony;
When age sits waiting mid the wintry winds
With suppliant hands beside a sepulcher,
Imploring rest for senses weary grown,
And blood that feels the burden of its tide—
Thou comest, kindly Death ! and at thy call
Life leapeth, welcoming thy folding arms.
But sorrow weepeth in the empty place
With eyes that backward turn across the world,
Recking the grave as rottenness and feast
Of carrion worms.

Thou breakest but to mend
O Death, with wider life or ancient rest !
But Faith looks not from out the eyes of Grief,
And Hope builds not her promise-bow across
The storm of tears. Yet ever, evermore,
From out the utmost reaches of the heart,
Where life holds rapport with the Mystery,
Are waftings felt that touch the doubts of grief,
And wooings heard that lure the eager thought.

Yea, questioning soul, the heart of Life is sweet !
Tears of the Christ and sighing of the Buddha
Cure not the outer evils of the world :
While bodies hold and nature hath her sway,
Some sorrows will there be—some pains to rack—
Some seeming evils in the elements.
But deeper than the passion's plummet sounds
A tossing waste of rare and radiant dreams
Is hungering upward ever toward the life ;
While calling, calling thro' the old disease
Whose virus is the passion of the lives
Wherethro' the blood hath coursed that serveth man
A voice is heard, that, underneath the thought,
Beside the fountain of the soul hath dwelt
And learned the sweetness of the Mystic Spring.

NOTES.

The Pan-American Congress of Religion and Education which met at Toronto, Canada, was not as well attended as the Parliament of Religions which convened during the year of the World's Fair at Chicago, but it was nevertheless a great success and carried along with it the enthusiasm for a broader comprehension and a deeper sympathy. It proves that the religious spirit is still alive and that even among those churchmen who emphasise the importance of dogma there is a demand for catholicity such as was never felt before. While the intention had been to limit the Congress to the religions represented in America, which are the various Christian denominations and Jews, the committee had arranged a special meeting in the St. James Square Church for the Religious Parliament Extension, and we are happy to say that, although there was a lack of foreign delegates, the speeches made on this occasion were not only very interesting, but also elevating and satisfactory. Of non-Christian religions Buddhism alone was represented by Professor Choyo, a native of Japan and at present a resident of Chicago. We hope to be able to present a report of this meeting by one of the delegates who was present.

The most important action taken by the Pan-American Congress of Religion and Education was the resolution that was passed at the last session. It reads as follows :

Resolved, That we recognise a vast movement, both human and divine, in such gatherings as the Parliament of Religions in Chicago and the Pan-American Congress at Toronto.

Resolved, That we recognise the importance of continued organisation and agitation in behalf of religious fraternity and a human brotherhood in truth and love, and to further this end we appoint the following gentlemen as an executive committee to determine time, place, and methods of future meetings :

Rev. David J. Burrell, D. D., President ; Hon. C. C. Bonney, Rev. John Henry Barrows, D.D , Rev. M. U. Gilbert, D.D., Rev. Samuel J. Smith, D.D., Very Rev. W. R. Harris, Rabbi Isaac Wise, Rabbi J Gottheil, Rev. F. M. Bristol, D D., Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D., Rev F. W Gunsaulus, D.D., Prof William Clarke, D.C.L., Rev. George Dana Boardman, D.D., Rev. Henry K. Carroll, D.D , Rev. Everett Hale, D.D., and Dr. Paul Carus.

Bishop Samuel Fallows, President of the newly founded People's Institute of Chicago, has started a movement which proposes to extend the spirit of the Religious Parliament through the establishment of local centres. He called it at first the University Association, but he has now changed the name into the World's Congresses Extension. The success which crowns his enterprise is beyond all expectation. There is a hunger in the country for spiritual food and a desire to grow and to broaden.

The movement of broadening our religion is not limited to America. We are just informed that in Ajmere, an important railroad station and a central city for the people of the Panjab, Bombay, and the Northwestern provinces of India, a congress is to be held on the 26th, 27th, and 28th of September, under the name of Dharma-mahotsava, which is similar to the World's Religious Parliament of Chicago. The most important passage of the statement runs as follows :

"The main objects of this religious movement are threefold :

"1. To promote the true religious spirit among all faiths.

"2. To afford a common platform for the advocates of different religions, where each can show to the best advantage the vital principles of his faith, without in the least entering into controversy with or hostility to any other faith.

"3. To place within easy reach of enlightened and educated men, trustworthy information about every form of religion, and leave them to judge of the merits of the same."

The committee request through their circular every one to see to it that the best advocate of his religion be sent as a representative, and they hope that the movement will tend to promote union among people of different faiths. The subjects announced are :

(1) God, (2) Soul, (3) Sin, (4) Transmigration, (5) Bodily Health, (6) Family Life, (7) Social Life, (8) Revelation, (9) Mediator, and (10) Salvation. The circular is signed by the President,

Salig Ram Shastri, Professor of Sanskrit, Ajmere Govt. College, and the Secretaries Fateh Chand Mehta, B A., L.L.B. (Cambridge), Barrister-at-law, etc., and Bithal Nath Misra.

The authoress of the article, "The Old Shoemaker," does not offer us a piece of sentimental imagination, but a description of a real event of her life. In an accompanying letter she writes as follows:

"A man is just dead,—a nobody,—a poor, old, miserable shoemaker,—not a good man nor a bad man; only seventy-five years of hard old suffering clay, with but one virtue, uncomplaining patience, and with all the vices of the squalid poor. I did not know him, only he was my neighbor. But his death is the most pathetic thing—the hard, old, silent death—with no one in the room.

"I have written some lines, out of the gladness and the pathos in me; it is a sermon for us, for us only, who believe that out of the body of pain the painless life welcomes the immortal good, and the rest—passes to soul-ashes. I have written though I know you are crowded with work. It seems to me you will care to read what I have written, though it is of the lives I know you do not know—lives out of your sphere, out of your sight altogether. Yet these are they to whom the new gospel of immortality best applies, for what hope is there in the *old* for these sad ironies of existence, within whom there dwells so little of the divine spirit—so much of that which *must die* utterly—for the race-hope!"

George F. Day, of Lansing, Mich., a lawyer who enjoyed the confidence of his fellow citizens, died suddenly in the bloom of life. Judge M. D. Chatterton, a friend of his, in an address to the court expressed his sorrow, and after a brief outline of Mr. Day's life, he said:

"From the known qualities of our deceased brother, no other but a pure, honorable and upright character could have been expected. During his life he selected only those desirable qualities which develop into noble manhood. His life was the natural outgrowth of the combination formed by the union of such principles.

"It has been said of George Washington that 'he couldn't tell a lie.' Why not? The answer is plain. His selections for the guide of his conduct had been from the manly side of life; he had none of the qualities which produce falsifiers or a dishonorable character.

"I can compare this life of ours to nothing which seems to me more appropriate than a kaleidoscope. If we place in this reflexion only the purest of gems, no matter which way it is turned, the picture is beautiful; but if we put in only spiders, snakes and scorpions every turn of it exhibits the hideous and the vile, nothing else can be produced. If we put in both good and bad it is uncertain what the picture will be.

"What was it about Mr. Day we so much admired? It was not his manly form. It was not the evidence of animal life he exhibited. It was the I, the ego, the man which manifested itself through his body. We read and admire Blackstone and Shakespeare. It is not for the printer's ink, the paper and binding that we have this high opinion, but for the immortal truths they contain.

"Several years ago I had the pleasure of passing through the King's palace of Italy. We went through the banqueting hall and through his bed-chamber. The silken sheets of his bed were turned down, so we could see where the King slept; but the King was not there. So we might take the surgeon's knife and search the body, or the apothecary's scales and weigh the gray matter of the brain, and not be able to find the man. Socrates, Seneca, and Epictetus spent their lives searching for the human soul.

"The unseen is more potent than the seen. The principles which lie behind the action are of more consequence than the act itself. The existence of the elements of love, hate, revenge, honesty and dishonesty, are as surely known as the existence of the mountains.

"The great and absorbing question which has agitated the human race for centuries is, "*Is man immortal?*" Does our deceased brother continue to exist? To be immortal is to be everlasting. Whatever has a beginning, will end. Principles alone are immortal. The great moral and educational truths always existed. Before the laying of the corner stones of the pyramids was thought of, geometrical truth existed. Man searches out and appropriates to himself these eternal truths. The individual collection constitutes the I, the ego, the man, by which he is and will be known, and either be admired or condemned.

"Will we continue to retain collectively this selection of immortalities, and thus preserve our personal identity? Or will this combination dissolve and go back to the ocean of truths from whence they came? Are we only waves dashing against an uninhabitable shore? I think not. We transmit to our posterity the general elements of our characters, we impart to our associates the substance of our mental accumulations. Our ego continues to live in the persons by whom we are surrounded, and with whom we are associated. The immortal principles of which we are composed existed separate and apart from our bodies before they were known to us. . . . From these facts and many more we might point out, we draw the satisfactory conclusion that our departed brother still lives.

Well may the engineers of this country be proud of their comrade George Peppet, who ran the passenger train on the Michigan Central which was wrecked on Friday last about one mile east of Marshall, Mich. While running at usual speed, the engine jumped the track with its front wheels, probably caused by the blowing out of a piston head. The fireman, naturally enough, jumped off the train, but the engineer remained on the engine, which ran for about two train lengths on the ties and then turned over completely, burying the brave man alive in the cab, where he was jammed against the door of the boiler. The mail car was completely wrecked, but no lives were lost. The fireman at once poured buckets of water through the grates and extinguished the fire, thus rendering the engineer's position less dangerous. After an hour and forty minutes' work the latter was brought to light again, and it was found that his hip was badly broken. The first word he spoke was a question whether any one on the train had been killed or injured, and when assured that all but himself were safe, he was satisfied. What would have been the result if he had left his post to save his life in a moment of imminent danger?

THE OPEN COURT

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